



CITY COUNCIL

Administrative Oversight Committee

Monday, January 07, 2008
Meeting Report

Attendance: S. Marmarou, M. Baez

Others Attending: C. Kanezo

I. Interviews

Marcia Schmehl (Appointment- Disruptive Conduct Review Board)

Mr. Marmarou thanked Ms. Schmehl for taking the time out of her schedule to meet with the members of the Administrative Oversight Committee; he asked why Ms. Schmehl was interested in serving on the Disruptive Conduct Review Board. Ms. Schmehl stated that she has been a longtime renter and concerned citizen. Ms. Schmehl thought the quality of her neighborhood was slowly beginning to deteriorate, due, in part, to renters who disregard their homes and neighborhoods.

Ms. Baez questioned if Ms. Schmehl was familiar with the provisions of the Disruptive Tennant Ordinance. Ms. Schmehl noted that she had already participated in the first meeting of the board, in a nonvoting and unofficial capacity. During the initial meeting legal aspects of the ordinance were discussed by the Managing Director and Michelle Mayfield. Ms. Schmehl stressed her familiarity with the ordinance and the importance of proper enforcement.

Mr. Marmarou asked how Ms. Schmehl would view a tenant with three disruptive conduct reports. Ms. Schmehl discussed how it is important to be fair and treat each matter openly; however, the ordinance is very clear with regard to three violations. Ms. Schmehl indicated she would be in favor of evicting a tenant with three violations. Ms. Schmehl thought the only way to improve the quality of rental properties throughout the City and thereby elevate the quality of life in neighborhoods would be through the strict enforcement of the ordinance.

Mr. Marmarou and Ms. Baez thanked Ms. Schmehl for her time. Mr. Kanezo requested Ms. Schmehl complete the standard BAC application. Mr. Kanezo explained the application is necessary for administrative purposes.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the appointment of Ms. Marcia Schmehl to the Disruptive Conduct Review Board.

Richard Bendar (Appointment- Disruptive Conduct Review Board)

Mr. Marmarou thanked Mr. Bendar for meeting with the Administrative Oversight Committee. Mr. Marmarou asked Mr. Bendar to describe his interest in serving on the Disruptive Conduct Review Board. Mr. Bendar stated that he was approached by the Managing Director to serve on the board. Mr. Bendar was a City resident and presently owns a number of rental properties located in the City. Mr. Bendar described his positive relationship with Codes and the time, money and effort he invests into each of his properties.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Bendar was familiar with the requirements of the Disruptive Tennant Ordinance, and, if so, had he ever evicted a tenant for receiving three citations. Mr. Bendar stated he was familiar with the ordinance, though he was unaware of ever evicting any tenants due to the ordinance. Mr. Bendar remarked that over the years he has evicted numerous tenants, largely for failure to pay rent, and is very familiar with the process. Mr. Marmarou inquired as to how many units Mr. Bendar owned. Mr. Bendar remarked that he operated 75 units.

Ms. Baez questioned if Mr. Bendar operated the properties himself, or if he employed a property manager. Mr. Bendar stated he was a fulltime landlord and managed the properties directly.

Mr. Marmarou requested Mr. Bendar discuss his opinion of the ordinance. Mr. Bendar felt the Disruptive Tennant Ordinance was cumbersome, but necessary. The ordinance would, hopefully, improve neighborhood quality of life by managing problem tenants. Mr. Bendar observed that the ordinance, in his opinion, was imperfect, but a useful first step.

Mr. Marmarou and Ms. Baez thanked Mr. Bendar for his time. Mr. Kanezo requested Mr. Bendar complete the standard BAC application. Mr. Kanezo explained the application is necessary for administrative purposes.

Mr. Marmarou recommended reviewing Mr. Bendars record as a property owner before making an appointment. The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to await the completion of an additional background check before considering his appointment.

Russell Manbeck (Appointment- Disruptive Conduct Review Board)

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. Manbeck was interested in serving on the Disruptive Conduct Review Board. Mr. Manbeck stated he worked as a property manger in the City of

Reading and through his work had come to know the Codes Department staff very well. Mr. Manbeck explained that he was approached by the Codes Department to serve on the board as a representative of property managers. Mr. Manbeck described the amount of work involved in managing quality properties; he emphasized the quality of the tenants he serves and the importance of maintaining a high level of quality.

Ms. Baez questioned if Mr. Manbeck had ever evicted any of his tenants. Mr. Manbeck remarked that tenant eviction, unfortunately, is a regular part of his business. During the course of the conversation, Mr. Manbeck recalled evicting one tenant for specifically receiving three disruptive conduct reports. Mr. Manbeck felt the ordinance was tough, but fair and ultimately necessary. Mr. Marmarou remarked, out of curiosity, on why landlords don't appear to look for better quality tenants. Mr. Manbeck explained landlords, typically, are looking to make their monthly rent payments and can't afford to allow units to remain vacant. According to Mr. Manbeck, responsible landlords will conduct background checks on their tenants before agreeing to rent.

Ms. Baez asked Mr. Manbeck if he conducts background checks of tenants on behalf of the properties he manages. Mr. Manbeck stated that he does conduct background checks on all tenants. Mr. Manbeck emphasized that background checks are not a complete solution but are useful in sorting out the most undesirable individuals.

Mr. Marmarou thanked Mr. Manbeck for his time. He then commented on the importance of the Disruptive Tenant Ordinance and the need for quality individuals to serve on it. Such individuals, according to Mr. Marmarou, are willing to be tough with respect to enforcement.

Mr. Kanezo requested Mr. Manbeck complete the standard BAC application. Mr. Kanezo explained the application is necessary for administrative purposes.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the appointment of Mr. Russell Manbeck to the Disruptive Conduct Review Board.

Donna Reed (Appointment- Parking Authority)

Donna Reed was appointed to the Parking Authority by Mayor McMahon. The interview with the members of the Administrative Oversight Committee was at the request of Mayor McMahon.

Mr. Marmarou and Ms. Baez thanked Ms. Reed for coming before the Administrative Oversight Committee. Ms. Reed remarked on how good it felt to be home. Mr. Marmarou asked if Ms. Reed would be willing to discuss why she wanted to serve on the Parking Authority. Ms. Reed felt her years of experience on City Council gave her a unique perspective on the workings of local government. Ms. Reed felt, in her heart of hearts, that she would be able to serve as a strong advocate and keeper of the public trust.

Mr. Marmarou commented on the tremendous addition Ms. Reed would make to the Parking Authority. Mr. Marmarou and Ms. Baez wished Ms. Reed the best of luck.

Mr. Kanezo requested Mr. Manbeck complete the standard BAC application. Mr. Kanezo explained the application is necessary for administrative purposes.

Ms. Reed commented that she was not sure if an application was necessary; as her appointment was at the discretion of the Mayor and that the interview with Council was merely a formality. Mr. Kanezo remarked that the application would be necessary to ensure board material is provided to the appropriate location. Mr. Kanezo also remarked that the application is standard procedure and should be followed regardless of who is making the appointment.

The Administrative Oversight Committee was not required to act upon the appointment of Donna Reed to the Reading Parking Authority.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Christopher G. Kanezo, Deputy City Clerk